



UNITED STATES PREHISTORIC INDIAN CULTURES

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 7-12

CHART: United States Prehistoric Indian Cultures

Level 7-8 Standards: 6100-01; 02; 03; 04
Utah Studies

Level 7-8 Standards: 6120-01; 02
United States History

Level 9-12 Standards: 6200-01; 02; 03
World Cultural Geography, Part I

Level 9-12 Standards: 6220-01; 02; 03
Ancient World Civilizations

OBJECTIVE: Students will discover the development of the prehistoric cultures of the Western Hemisphere.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION 1: Why do some tribes' creation stories differ from the "Bering Strait" theory?

ESSENTIAL QUESTION 2: Did groups from various locations in the North American continent all develop through the same timeline?

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Assign a research project, and allow students to view the maps on the computer (or project the charts using a Video iPod) and research each group. Students can learn about contributions to our society by these early cultures (i.e., foods, homes, tools, medicines, time-telling, etc.).

Research tribes' traditions about their creation. Many tribes do not believe their origin was through migration from the Bering Strait. Discuss the Star People; the beliefs of the Cree, Hopi, Navajo and Pueblo about their emergence into the Fourth World; and other creation beliefs of tribes. Using critical analysis, students will develop or support an existing theory about the different groups' origins. This project should be given more time because of the importance of establishing the foundation on which the students will build the rest of their information about the American Indians.

Students can research and create a report (oral or written) on suggested migration routes from Asia to Alaska. They can develop an opinion based on research and indicate similarities in tribes in Alaska and the continental United States.

There were four major groups of cultures of prehistoric America; the students should be able to identify two theories about prehistoric cultures' origins through discussion or in a written report for class presentation.

LEARNING STRATEGIES

The charts on the computer at <http://www.uen.org> can be viewed by the students before and during the class presentation. The teacher can instruct on these four groups of prehistoric Indians:

- Eastern fluted point hunters (Modoc)
- Eastern Archaic
- Eastern village farmers (western Hopewell, Mound Builders)
- Southwestern farmers (Hohokam, Anasazi)

Discuss in small groups the possibility that one group may have evolved into the next group.

Discuss the Mound Builders—their culture and spiritual beliefs—based on findings about their burial. In a class discussion, the students should list two cultural attributes for each of the four major groups studied (e.g., basket makers, mound builders, belief in afterlife, toolmakers).

Using the following passage, discuss the meaning of culture:

Culture Discussion Ideas by Brenda D. Francis, M.A.

Questions for students:

1. What do you think culture is?
2. Define material and non-material culture for the class, explaining differences and giving examples.

Definitions:

Material culture: Items you can touch and/or see. Clothing, shelter, food, books, medicine, written records, tools, art, etc.

Non-material culture: Items you cannot touch and/or see and which, if not recorded in some way, would be lost to archeologists in the future. Religion, language, and oral traditions.

Culture must always have a date; you cannot discuss culture without attaching a date to it, because the culture of a given group of people changes with time. This becomes obvious with the discussion points below.

Discuss the following:

3. Name some things that you think are part of modern American material culture. (Answers may vary from Nike or Skecher shoes to pizza, hamburgers, apple pie, American flag, blue jeans, the Internet, Star Wars, etc.)
4. Name some things that are non-material American culture (prom night, Halloween, English language, religion, etc.).
5. Name some items, material or non-material, which are not associated generally with American culture. Note that it may not be impossible to find examples of these in the United States, but that they are very uncommon here, and are likely to be associated with other cultures and/or other countries (e.g., bagpipes, communism, Buddhism, boomerang, Afrikaans or Arabic language, etc.).
6. Name some cultural items from America's past (ask the students to name items from a specific time period, such as Colonial, American Revolution, Civil War, Depression, etc.). Talk about how different the culture from that time period is versus the culture today.
7. What is American Indian culture? (Their answers may vary widely and will most likely be inaccurate, stereotypical, or outdated. Answers may include Indian [or Navajo] tacos, powwows, drums, teepees, hogans, buffalo, moccasins, braided hair, feathers in a headband, buckskin dresses, loincloths, scalping, beadwork, etc.)
8. Lead a discussion with the students about American Indian culture—that it was not and is not the same across the continent. When European explorers came to the American continent, there were literally hundreds of tribal groups whose material cultures varied widely, dependent upon the environment in which they lived, the natural resources available, etc. The non-material cultures were also very different from one another. There were hundreds of languages and dialects spoken on this continent, many oral traditions, and different religions and creation stories.

Resource materials may be found listed at the end of the Guide.

